

Testimony of Stacy Prince before the Planning & Development Committee

**RAISED BILL 343, AN ACT CONCERNING INTERVENTION IN PERMIT PROCEEDINGS
PURSUANT TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT OF 1971**

Submitted by Stacy Prince, private citizen and mother of a cancer survivor

March 9, 2012

Dear Senator Cassano, Representative Gentile, and members of the Committee,

As the mother of a cancer survivor, I am frankly horrified by Raised Bill 343, AAC Intervention in Permit Proceedings Pursuant to the Environmental Protection Act of 1971. I respectfully oppose it, as it unfairly targets citizens who only want to protect the air they breathe, the water they drink, and the earth they garden or play on.

When my daughter was diagnosed with leukemia at age 3, I needed to learn what to keep her away from, in order to avoid further risk of cancer. Environmental concerns topped the list, so when my daughter finished her two and a half years of chemotherapy, I spent some time advocating for a safe, healthy environment. I found that many of my neighbors incorrectly assumed that state and federal statutes protected them fully from environmental harms, and that the laws on the books were effectively enforced. I also found that once people had spent some time learning about environmental issues, many of them wanted to be heard.

In Connecticut, the deck is already stacked against anyone whose concern for something "environmental" might lead to a change in the way a person -- but more often a company -- pursues business. Both existing law (preemption bills, for example) and the rhetoric of the business community makes any state or local official hesitant to speak out for the common good. Furthermore, the exigencies of making a living or taking care of our families already make it extremely difficult for citizens to speak out. Contrast this with developers and lobbyists, who profit financially from the time they spend advocating for their "side." *Please don't make it harder for "real people" to do the right thing!*

Because we *are* real people, and the threats are real. "Environmental interveners" is a just fancy name for "you and me" -- those of us whom the law should protect. And few of us have the money to take on big corporations -- or the knowledge and power base from which to lobby. In this uncertain economy, especially, the risk of having to pay a developer's legal fees would absolutely keep me from taking action if I had evidence that a development near me was illegally damaging the environment.

Please oppose this bill. Even if compassion for people like me isn't enough, think of your own family. One day it may be your grandkid growing up next to a toxic dump site, and you're going to want the right every citizen should have to speak your truth without fear of reprisals, financial or otherwise.

Thank you for your consideration.